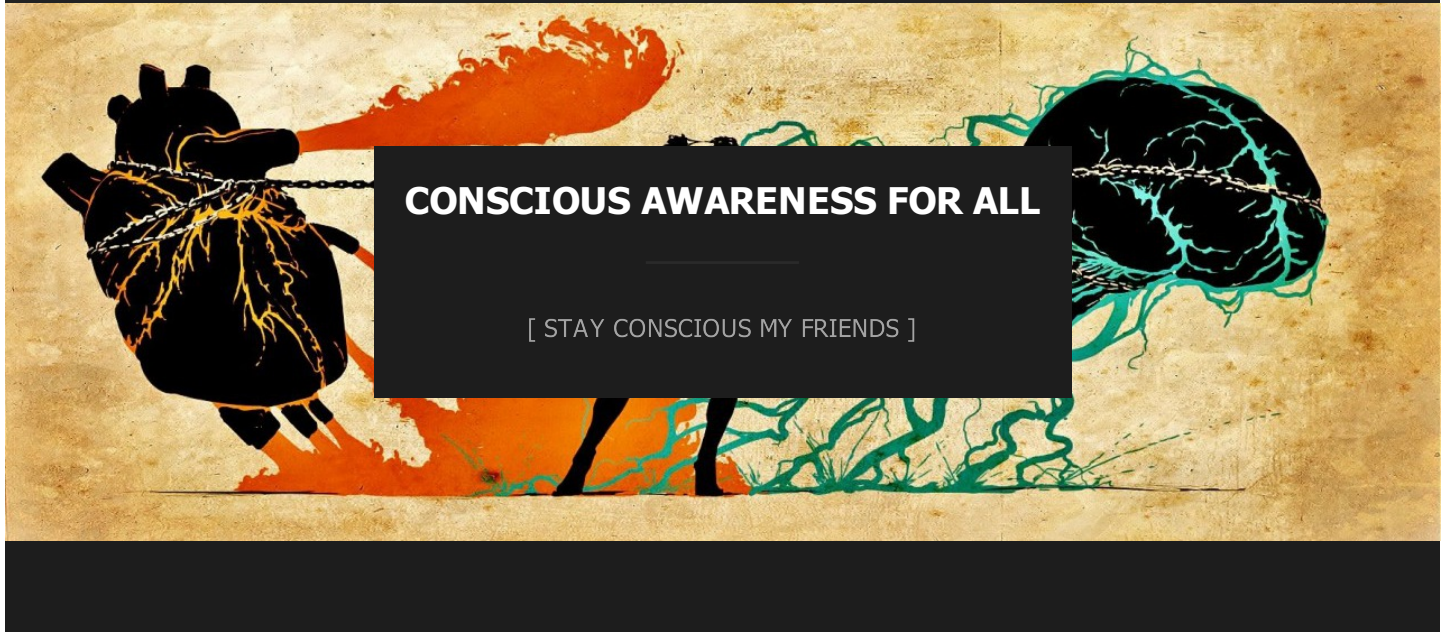


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## QUEST FOR OIL: U.S. Inciting Civil War In Venezuela

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Bolivian President **EVO MORALES** has warned that Washington DC is pushing Venezuela towards a civil war in order to gain access to the country's rich oil reserves, as well as fomenting a coup d'état.

Addressing over 3,000 young people at a Latin American youth summit in the Bolivian city of Santa Cruz, Morales branded the U.S. an empire with its eye on Venezuelan oil wealth. Morales said that Venezuelan President **NICOLAS MADURO** was blameless in the recent wave of unrest in the country.

***"I believe [the U.S.] are trying to incite if not a coup d'état, then a civil war from their empire," Morales said. "They are always going to sponsor internal conflict so that they can***

***interfere and invade us to take control of our oil reserves."***

The world needs an *"anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and anti-colonial youth,"* said Morales, urging Latin Americans to stand together in solidarity with Venezuela. Morales said that there was no danger of a coup d'état in Bolivia since the government had **ejected** U.S. Ambassador **PHILLIP GOLDBERG** in 2008 after he was accused of collaborating in a **plot to overthrow the government**.

Venezuela has been gripped by a wave of anti-government protests since February which has left at least **41 dead** and over **600 injured**. The Venezuelan government has recognized the people's right to demonstrate, but has **accused foreign-backed, right-wing extremists** of hijacking the protests in an attempt to oust President Maduro.

At present, Maduro's government is in dialogue with some of the members of the opposition movement to try and find a peaceful solution to the conflict. The opponents of the government complain that Venezuela is experiencing massive inflation and shortages of basic food products, as well as frequent power cuts.

Maduro recently announced that Venezuela was facing an **economic war**, and as such, his government intended to fight back with a new offensive to combat capitalism. He set out the main aims of the new initiative, including the encouragement of supply and production, and the stabilization of prices in Venezuela.

***"This new economic offensive should bring prosperity to the people and the country. Neoliberalism speaks of growth, but growth for whom? For those that always had wealth, not the have-nots,"*** said Maduro.

Maduro has previously blamed the strife in Venezuela on Washington DC, saying that the U.S. is orchestrating the unrest in order to overthrowing his government. In March 2014, Caracas's foreign minister **ELIAS JAUA** accused U.S. Secretary of State **JOHN KERRY** of inciting murder and violence in Venezuela. Washington has denied ALL links to the ongoing unrest and maintains that the Venezuelan government is **terrorizing its own people**.

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